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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/674,646	09/30/2003	William G. America	YOR920030320US1 (16868)	4797
23389 7590 03/04/2009 SCULLY SCOTT MURPHY & PRESSER, PC 400 GARDEN CITY PLAZA SUITE 300 GARDEN CITY, NY 11530			EXAMINER CHEN, JACK S J	
			ART UNIT 2893	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 03/04/2009	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/674,646	Applicant(s) AMERICA ET AL.	
	Examiner Jack Chen	Art Unit 2893	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 December 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,4-7,9-11 and 20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-2, 4-7, 9-11 and 20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

2. Claims 1-2, 4, 6, 10-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Pan et al., US/6,846,756 B2.

Pan et al. disclose an interconnect structure comprising: one or more interconnect levels, one on top of each other, each level comprising a organo-silicate glass (i.e., OSG having dielectric constant of less than 3) dielectric material 26 (fig. 2A) having a plasma treated surface layer (figs. 2B-2C and col. 7, line 32-col. 9, line 8) that provides improved adhesion to an overlying lower hardmask comprising a dielectric material 34 (in this case, metal nitride such as tantalum nitride, tungsten nitride, titanium nitride etc. is considered as the dielectric material because each of the above cited metal nitride has dielectric porperties) or 26 (M2 level), yet is substantially undamaged; a dielectric cap layer 21A beneath said OSG dielectric material; and an upper hardmask 26 (M2 or M3 level) located atop said lower hardmask, see figs. 1-3 and cols. 1-12 for more details.

Re claim 2, wherein the OSG dielectric material comprises a non-porous or porous material having a dielectric constant less than 3 (this is the intrinsic properties of the material).

Art Unit: 2893

Re claim 4, wherein the OSG dielectric material comprises a material of Si, C, O and H and having a dielectric constant less than about 3 (i.e., 2.8).

Re claim 6, further comprising a dielectric cap layer 21A beneath said OSG dielectric material (fig. 2A).

Re claim 10, further comprising an upper hardmask 26 (i.e. another interconnect level, such as M2) located atop said lower hardmask (fig. 1A).

Re claim 11, wherein said lower hardmask does not include a densified surface layer (fig. 2C).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Art Unit: 2893

5. Claims 5, 7, 9 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pan et al., US/6,846,756 B2.

Pan et al. disclosed above; however, Pan et al. is silent to the OSG composition as recited in claim 5, the degree of adhesion as recited in claim 9 and the material for the lower hardmask as recited in claim 7.

Re claims 5, 9 and 20, claimed ranges of the composition of OSG and the degree of adhesion, absent evidence of disclosure of criticality for the range giving unexpected results are considered to involve routine optimization while has been held to be within the level of ordinary skill in the art. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to select suitable composition for the OSG and the degree of adhesion in the device of Pan et al., since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. As noted in *In re Aller* 105 USPQ233, 255 (CCPA 1955), the selection of reaction parameters such as temperature and concentration, etc. would have been obvious. See also *In re Waite* 77 USPQ 586 (CCPA 1948); *In re Scherl* 70 USPQ 204 (CCPA 1946); *In re Irmischer* 66 USPQ 314 (CCPA 1945); *In re Norman* 66 USPQ 308 (CCPA 1945); *In re Swenson* 56 USPQ 372 (CCPA 1942); *In re Sola* 25 USPQ 433 (CCPA 1935); *In re Dreyfus* 24 USPQ 52 (CCPA 1934).

With respect to claims 7 and 20, using a dielectric layer comprises of Si, C, O and H for the hardmask have been known in the art. The selection of a known material based on its suitability for its intended use supported a prima facie obviousness determination in *Sinclair & Carroll Co., Inc. v. Interchemical Corp.*, 325 U.S. 327, 65 USPQ 297 (1945). "Reading a list

Art Unit: 2893

and selecting a known compound to meet known requirements is no more ingenious than selecting the last piece to put in the last opening in a jig - saw puzzle." 65 USPQ at 301.).

Furthermore, the specification contains no disclosure of either the critical nature of the claimed material (i.e. – hardmask comprises a dielectric material of Si, C, O and H) or any unexpected results arising therefrom. Where patentability is said to be based upon particular chosen limitations or upon another variable recited in a claim, the Applicant must show that the chosen limitations are critical. *In re Woodruff*, 919 F.2d 1575, 1578 (Fed. Cir. 1990).

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments filed 3/26/08 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive for reason herein above.

Conclusion

7. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event,

Art Unit: 2893

however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jack Chen whose telephone number is (571)272-1689. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday (8:00am-4:30pm).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Davienne N. Monbleau can be reached on (571)272-1945. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Jack Chen
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2893

/Jack Chen/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2893
March 1, 2009